

Documents in Upcoming National Security Archive Publication Show Kissinger's Behind-the-Scenes Efforts to Mitigate Fallout from Church Committee Report

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by The Archive

(<https://nsarchive.files.wordpress.com/2016/03/newsweek.png>)

"on no account had we anything to do with the kidnapping of Schneider."

A November 25, 1975, telephone conversation

(<https://nsarchive.files.wordpress.com/2016/03/elkin-11-24-75-31.pdf>) (telcon) between Secretary of State Henry Kissinger and Newsweek Magazine executive editor Mel Elfin "sheds light on the behind-the-scenes efforts by Henry Kissinger to mitigate the political fallout from the revelatory Church Committee report, and distort the truth about the Nixon-Kissinger CIA operations in Chile", according to the National Security Archive's Peter Kornbluh, author of *The Pinochet File: A Declassified Dossier on Atrocity and Accountability*

(<http://www.amazon.com/The-Pinochet-File-Declassified-Accountability/dp/1595589120>).

The November 25 telcon, one of hundreds being published on March 15, 2016, through the **Digital National Security Archive** (<http://nsarchive.chadwyck.com/marketing/index.jsp>) (DNSA) with the help of our partners at ProQuest (<https://www.google.com/search?>

q=proquest&oq=proq&aqs=chrome.0.69i59j69i57j69i60l3j69i61.1309j0j7&sourceid=chrome&es_sm=91&ie=UTF-8), shows Kissinger trying to convince Elfin that the Nixon White House didn't have anything to do with the kidnapping and murder of the Chilean commander in Chief, General Rene Schneider, in October 1970. Kissinger tells Elfin, "on no account had we anything to do with the kidnapping of Schneider." Kissinger also calls the Church Committee a "nut house" while attempting to extricate himself and the White House from being tied to a major political assassination and a coup attempt, and shows him trying to scapegoat the CIA, saying "The CIA started it up on the 19th. I think they wanted to prove to Nixon what great guys they were and knew Nixon would be delighted if they succeeded, but that didn't come off."

In another quotable document from the upcoming collection, a **July 1976 telcon** (<https://nsarchive.files.wordpress.com/2016/03/doc056.pdf>), an astonished Kissinger asks United States National Security Advisor Brent Scowcroft "What do you mean NSA deletes the names?" upon learning that the agency redacted the names of two US officials who were caught blabbing in a communications intercept report. Scowcroft replied, "On the instructions from the Attorney General. They are Americans. Privacy of information. Unbelievable."

(<https://nsarchive.files.wordpress.com/2016/03/unbelievable.png>)
"Privacy of Information. Unbelievable."

In a **September 30, 1974, telcon** (<https://nsarchive.files.wordpress.com/2016/03/00128tseq-1.pdf>) Kissinger tells President Ford that "megalomania must have limits" when Kissinger is placed on the call before Ford.

These telcons can all be found in the **National Security Archive's** (<http://nsarchive.gwu.edu/>) new compilation of documents on Henry Kissinger, the larger-than-life statesman who remains one of the **most controversial figures** (<http://www2.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB135/>) in the history of modern U.S. foreign relations. The collection, *The Kissinger Conversations, Supplement II: A Verbatim Record of U.S. Diplomacy, 1969-1977*, totals more than 900 documents and updates the National Security Archive's substantial body of documents focusing on Kissinger's roles in policymaking and diplomacy under presidents Nixon and Ford.

The collection – most of which was declassified as a result of a 2001 Archive FOIA request – includes 971 freshly declassified memoranda of telcons and nine memoranda of conversation (memcons) of White House and State Department meetings. Almost all of these documents were declassified at the specific request of the National Security Archive. Among them are recently declassified telcons from the Richard Nixon Presidential Library of conversations between Kissinger, President Nixon, Secretary of Defense Melvin Laird, and CIA director Richard Helms, among others.

All of the telcons from 1974-1976 are the result of a **2001 Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request** (<http://nsarchive.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB526-Court-Ordered-Release-of-Kissinger-Telcons/>) for Kissinger's State Department telephone conversations. During the course of time, the State Department denied information from over 160 telcons from the original FOIA case and exempted over 770 documents in their entirety. In the latter decision, the Department withheld those telcons on two grounds: executive privilege and **"pre-decisional" information under the FOIA's (b)(5) exemption** (<http://nsarchive.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB503/>). The Department's responses to appeals under the Act were so dilatory that in 2015 the Archive found it necessary to go to court to compel a decision. In August 2015, under federal court order, the State Department released all of the documents under appeal, including the hundreds that had been exempted altogether. Corresponding to the Department's executive privilege claim, most of the denied telcons were of Kissinger's conversations with President Ford, Vice President Nelson Rockefeller, and Deputy National Security Adviser Brent Scowcroft, who, in November 1975, took over the role of national security adviser when Kissinger was demoted.

The publication contains documents essential for the research of:

The impact of press leaks about illegal CIA domestic operations, assassination planning, and other intelligence activities which led to the Church Committee investigations during 1975.

The Middle East, including U.S. conduct during the 1973 October War and Kissinger's role in shuttle diplomacy during 1974-1975.

Wars in Indochina: not only Vietnam, but also Laos and Cambodia, and the White House's role in managing United States military operations in these countries, including the final stages of these conflicts.

U.S.-Soviet détente and Kissinger's conduct of **"back channel**

(<http://www2.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB135/19761103.pdf>)”
diplomacy with the Soviet leadership.

Kissinger’s working relationships with top officials: Presidents Nixon and Ford, Secretary of Defense Laird, Secretary of State William Rogers, and National Security Adviser Scowcroft, among others.

Republican Party politics during 1976, especially party primaries and the national convention.

The Archive has previously published three collections documenting Kissinger’s interaction with foreign leaders and diplomats as well as U.S. government officials. *The Kissinger Transcripts: A Verbatim Record of U.S. Diplomacy, 1969-1976* (<http://www2.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB193/>) includes 2,163 transcripts of Kissinger’s meetings, *The Kissinger Telephone Conversations: A Verbatim Record of U.S. Diplomacy, 1969-1977* (<http://www2.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB193/press.htm>) comprises 15,502 detailed records of his telephone conversations, and *The Kissinger Conversations, Supplement: A Verbatim Record of U.S. Diplomacy, 1969-1977* (<https://nsarchive.wordpress.com/2014/11/10/the-kissinger-conversations-new-compilation-to-update-archives-substantial-collection-of-kissinger-documents/>), totals more than 600 documents. These collections represent an invaluable source for research on U.S. diplomatic and military history during the late 1960s and the 1970s.

If you don’t already have DNSA (<http://www.proquest.com/products-services/dnsa.html>), sign up for a free trial (<https://www.proquest.com/trials/requestTrialInput.action?trialBean.promoCode=DNSAMEXICO>) today.

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